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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0530

HENRY A. WAXMAN
30TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

May 13, 2010

Administrator Peter M. Rogoff
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Administrator Rogoff:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Westside Subway Extension project in Los Angeles County and to recommend an appropriate means for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to evaluate and rate the project in the Federal New Starts process.

The Westside Subway Extension is a nine-mile heavy rail project that would extend the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) subway to a new western terminus in Westwood. The project will be built in one of the nation's densest urban corridors and air quality non-attainment areas. Once completed, the extension will provide a high-capacity transit connection between the major urban centers of Century City, Westwood and downtown Los Angeles, and dramatically expand new ridership into Metro's entire rail system. In addition, local revenue from Measure R, a self-imposed half cent sales tax for transit and highway improvements in LA County, has already been secured as the required local match to complete the nine-mile project.

The project's strong mobility, environmental, economic, job creation, operating and land-use benefits, and ridership projections, are expected to rate well under the New Starts criteria. It is essential for the FTA to evaluate and rate the entire nine-mile project through Westwood, and to approve the project in its entirety for entry into preliminary engineering and clearance under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Federal New Starts evaluations should reflect the comprehensive costs and benefits of an overall project.

While construction of the extension is expected at this time to be carried out in three phases in order to accommodate the projected flow of Measure R revenue and federal New Starts funds, the FTA took similar action to evaluate the Metro Red Line Subway as a single project even though it was built in phases between 1989 and 2000. Rating the project in its entirety would have the additional benefit of avoiding unnecessary inefficiency and delay that would escalate the project's cost. Moreover, it would ensure that the FTA is prepared to consider the entire Westside Subway Extension project for completion as a single-phase program if the "30/10 Initiative" recently adopted by the MTA Board succeeds in accelerating the timeline for completing the transit projects outlined in Measure R.

May 13, 2010

Page 2

I look forward to working with you to ensure the appropriate consideration of the Westside Subway Extension to Westwood. It is a project with considerable regional and national significance and presents a major opportunity to promote mobility and job growth in Southern California. I appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Henry A. Waxman", is written over a printed name.

HENRY A. WAXMAN

Member of Congress